

# Teaching Tips and Techniques

## Create and Sustain Motivation

As comprehensive and engaging as materials may be, it is the teacher who truly brings the adventure of learning to life in the classroom. In fact, the decisions a teacher makes regarding materials, procedures, rules, and use of time and space in class help facilitate the teaching and learning objectives of a course.

In *English Adventure*, students are encouraged to be an important part of the learning process. This fosters in them a sense of responsibility and cooperation, helps sustain interest and motivation, promotes confidence in their own learning capacity, and provides them with needed skills.

## Before Teaching

**Make the classroom special.** Start off by making the classroom, no matter how small, as conducive to learning as possible. Surround your students with English. Make the walls come alive with examples of their work and lively posters from English-speaking countries. Display on your desk an interesting object or picture linked to the topic of the lesson to spark interest.

**Create and follow sound rules and agreements.** It is a good idea to start off the course by teaching students rules and norms for a positive classroom atmosphere. Talk about polite behavior and interaction in the classroom. Discuss expected outcomes.

**Create rituals and routines.** Children thrive on fun rituals and routines that engage their senses and support their performance. Set up a predictable environment, where learners know what they are to do and when, how, and why they are to do it.



**Be prepared and organized.** Check that you have all the materials you need and that any necessary equipment is available and in working order.

**Sustain motivation.** There is nothing more infectious than a teacher's enthusiasm and passion for the subject. Show optimism and confidence that all of your students can learn.

**Plan how the lesson starts.** Consider what time your class meets and where your students were before your class. For example, if your class is the first of the day, begin energetically, with a movement chant or a mix-and-mingle activity. If your students come to your class after lunch and time outside, you may want an activity that will calm them down.

**Make the most of taking attendance.** Get the class focused on English from the very start. Use taking attendance to recycle previously learned vocabulary by having students call out a vocabulary item instead of saying "present." For example, (*Jorge*), upon hearing his name, would call out (*apple*) if the vocabulary set were food. You may want children to add a rhythmic pattern by clapping, snapping their fingers, or rapping their knuckles on their desks.

## While Teaching

**Vary interactional patterns.** Make sure you have students work through activities in a variety of ways: individually, in pairs, in small groups, and as a whole class.

**Control the length and cognitive challenge of activities.** Young children have short attention spans and require frequent changes in activities. Take care that activities are not too long, and pay attention to their level of difficulty as well. One way to do this is to associate activities with movements: PUSH, PUNCH, and SNAP. Think of a long and challenging activity as a PUSH, a short but challenging activity as a PUNCH, and a short, less challenging activity as a SNAP. Put yourself in your learners' shoes and decide whether your plan has the right sequence of pushes, punches, and snaps for your teaching situation; adjust if necessary. You will want to follow a challenging activity with a less lengthy, less challenging one, alternating duration and difficulty.

**Include a WOW! activity in every lesson.** Make sure to include an activity you know will captivate your learners. Ritualize the activity as much as possible. For example, announce with a flourish, *And now, young ladies and gentlemen, the moment you are waiting for!* Look in the Teacher's Edition teaching notes and in your lesson plan to identify what you believe to be the WOW piece. It need not be something elaborate and completely new; it is fine if it's an activity your students have enjoyed greatly in the past. Just adjust the activity for the new content.

**Share the plan for the day.** Establish a routine in which you share a summary of the activities for the day. This is a useful way of giving children early intuitions of structure and organization, and of helping them concentrate as well as delay gratification. Build expectations and give the children a choice of activity at some point in the lesson. Remember to announce what you expect will be the most enjoyable activity, the WOW piece. You may want to use a flip chart or a decorated piece of poster paper entitled Today's Menu, listing the different parts of the lesson as if they were food courses. The WOW piece could be Today's Special. Alternatively, you may want to display the day's activities as if they were a show or a play with Acts and Intermission.

**Gain students' attention quickly and smoothly.** Do not raise your voice. Instead, use one of the following techniques with your class: (1) Stand where everyone can see you. Raise your hand, and tell the group that when they see your hand raised, they should immediately stop talking and raise their own hands. Practice it a few times so that everyone understands. At first, only one or two students might notice that your hand is raised, and feel hesitant about stopping talking and raising their own hands. Encourage students to do so until the system is routine for everyone. (2) Flash the classroom lights on and off a couple of times as a signal for quiet. (3) Initiate a rhythmic clapping sequence that students begin doing as they notice. (4) Hold up a large sign on a stick that you or students have made, perhaps a giant cut-out of the letter Q.

**Organize the grouping of students for pair and group work.** Many activities in *English Adventure* are set up for pair work or group work. The keys to successful grouping are clarity (learners should know exactly how they are to group themselves), simplicity (the criterion for grouping should be simple), and speed (once the criterion has been given, learners should group in one or two minutes). There are many ways to divide students up into pairs and groups. The important thing is to train your students to do the grouping quickly and smoothly, whichever system you use.

**Give pair and group work instructions effectively.** Once learners are grouped, it is time for instructions. Key to the success of an activity, instructions should be clear, brief, and unambiguous. Start by explaining what learners should do, using the board or the materials students will work with. Give an example or model with a student what they have to do. Finally, check that students understand by asking two or three questions or by having students repeat back what they will do. Give out handouts or materials students will need at this point. By

following this sequence, you are making sure that instructions have been processed through all the senses, and you have greatly improved the likelihood of success. As students do the pair and group work, walk around the classroom monitoring their progress and helping those who need it.

**Give timely and appropriate feedback.** Focus on correcting errors that truly impair communication. When possible, allow students to try self-correction, and then peer correction, before you correct an error. When the student is intent on communicating meaningful content, and trying to express thoughts and ideas, avoid on-the-spot correction. In these instances, simply respond to the meaning of what the learner is saying, rephrasing correctly what he or she means to say. (Ramon: *I goed to a good movie this weekend.* You: *Oh? You went to a good movie this weekend? What was it?*) When you are focusing on form and on accuracy, correction at the moment is appropriate. (You: *Alicia, number five, please.* Alicia: *Pat goed to the park.* You: *Goed? Are you sure? Think.* Alicia: *Pat went to the park.*) For correction of students' written work, concentrate most of it at the editing stage, after content and organizational issues have been resolved. Then focus on the word choice, grammar, and mechanics (spelling, capitalization, punctuation). Throughout the course, remind students that errors are natural, normal (everyone makes them), and necessary (they help us see how far we have come in the learning process and what needs to be revisited).

**End lessons smoothly.** Each day's lesson should reflect basic organization: beginning, middle, end. Bring your lesson to a positive close with one of the following techniques: (1) Create a "class is over" gesture, such as having students "high-five" each other or shake hands or wave good-bye. (2) Have students choose a favorite song from the course and sing it. (3) Have a different student lead a good-bye chant, written by all the students. (4) Have students line up and "pay" to exit the classroom by saying a word or sentence (the name of an animal, a piece of clothing, what the weather is like today, or something relevant to your class).

## After Teaching

**Reflect on your learners.** Think back to the day's lesson and identify learners who may need special support or help. Plan what you can do to increase their understanding in the next class. Rate the general level of motivation and involvement of the students for the day: below average? average? above average? Note which activities and activity types students responded to most and least. What were the problems with students? What can you do better next time?

**Reflect on your class management.** In a mental self-check, rate yourself from one to five for (1) start of the lesson (2) gaining attention (3) clarity of instructions (4) feedback to learners (5) close of the lesson (6) general pacing and flow of the lesson.

**Pat yourself on the back.** Being a teacher is one of the most difficult, time-consuming, important, challenging, and immensely satisfying professions! Congratulations for taking on the task!

## Resource Bank of Games and Activities

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Before doing these games, remind students about noise levels. It is useful to model the game for the class before having the whole class start.

### Puppet Games

**Teacher Puppet** A puppet or soft, stuffed toy can be useful for teaching language to young children. Use the puppet exclusively for English lessons, and put it away at other times. Explain to students that the puppet speaks only English.

**Say and Act Out** Have the puppet ask students to say a word or act out simple instructions: *Say a color. Name an animal. Point to red. Stand up. Pick up your eraser. Take out your notebook. Work with a partner*, and so on.

**Questions** Have the puppet ask students simple questions, such as, *What's your name? What's your favorite toy? What color is it? Do you have a pencil? What is it?*

**Can I Have It?** Distribute one or two sets of Picture Cards or Student Cards. Have students say the words as you hand out the cards. Then have the puppet ask: *Can I have the (kite), please?* Students respond.

**Pass the Puppet** Place students in a circle. Play a song and have students pass the puppet around the circle as they listen. Pause the song and ask the student who has the puppet to say a word or a line from the song. Repeat.

### Picture or Student Card Games

**Clap Hands** Go through a lexical set of Picture Cards and encourage students to say the words with you. Then show them a card without looking at it yourself (hold it above your head so that the students can see it but you can't). Say a word from the lexical set. If the word by chance corresponds to the picture on the card, students clap their hands. If not, they shake their heads. Continue saying words from the lexical set until you guess the right one.

**Flash the Picture** Show a card very quickly and ask, *What is it?* The aim of the game is for the students to guess what the picture is as quickly as possible. Show the card again for a little longer, if necessary, until students guess what the picture is.

**Stand Up** Distribute a lexical set of cards (for example, *toys*) to a group of students. Call out the words for toys in random order, and ask the students to stand up when they hear the word that corresponds to their card.

**What's Different?** Stick five cards on the board, four from one lexical set (*toys*) and one from another lexical set (*foods*). Ask the students, *Which one is different?* Confident students can take your role and select the cards themselves; the rest of the class identifies the different items.

**Numbers** Stick five cards on the board and invite some students to the front of the class. Ask them to write a number under the card you name. For example, say, *The (pencil) is number (one)*. When each card has a number, have the class identify the cards, asking, *What's number (three)?*

**Concentration** Show the students a set of ten cards and go through the words as you do so. For each card ask, *What is it?* Elicit, *It's a (boat)*. Then play concentration. Stick the cards face down on the board and write a number from one to ten under each one. Divide the class into two teams. Call out one of the words, such as *chicken*, and ask the first team to guess which number it is. Turn the card over. If it corresponds to the word, the team wins two points. If not, the second team can answer, and receive one point if correct. Teams take turns until all the cards are turned over.

**Mime** Play some music and pass a lexical set of cards around the class. Stop the music and ask the students who are holding the cards to stand up. Ask them (in L1 if necessary) to mime an action that could be done with the picture on the card (for example, for *banana*, students mime peeling or eating the banana). The rest of the class guesses what the word is.

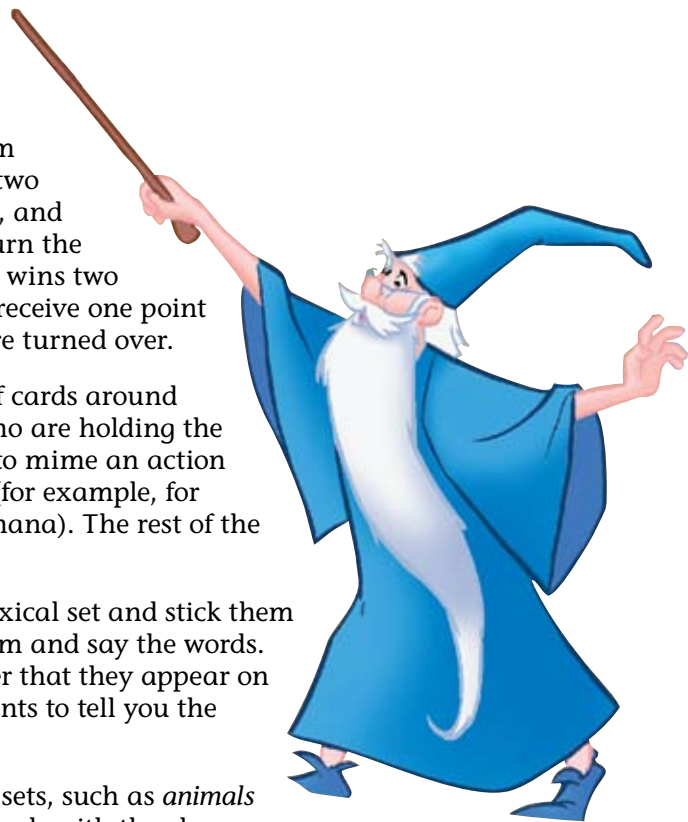
**Sequences** Choose four cards from the same lexical set and stick them on the board. Ask some volunteers to look at them and say the words. Now ask them to memorize the cards in the order that they appear on the board. Turn the cards over and ask the students to tell you the sequence of cards from memory.

**Categories** Using the cards, review two lexical sets, such as *animals* and *foods*. Show the cards and go through the words with the class. Then divide the class in two groups and ask each group to say as many words as they can remember from one of the two lexical sets. Give the teams one point for each correct word. Give two points if they say correct complete sentences, such as *It's a green pencil*.

**Box Game** Put several cards in a box. Call on a student to come to the front of the class, pick a card from the box, and name the corresponding word. The student continues until he or she can't name a card. The student gets a point for each picture named. This game can also be played in teams. And if your class is very large, divide the class into two groups and give each group a box with cards to give more students the chance to participate.

**Whispers** Divide the class into two groups and ask each group to stand in a row (the first student in each row should be next to the desk). Display two lexical sets of cards (one per group, such as *food* and *animals*) on the desk. Choose a different word for each group (*bread* for one group and *horse* for the other group), and whisper it to the last student at the end of the row. Say, *Start!* Then the students pass the word along their row by whispering. The first student in the row, standing next to the desk, picks up the card corresponding to the whispered word and shows it. The group gets a point for every correct picture card they pick up.

**Circles and Hearts** Divide the class into two groups. Ask them to choose either the *circle* or the *heart* as their symbol. Stick nine cards on the board in three rows. Ask the first team to choose a card and name it. If the word is correct, draw a circle or heart around the card (depending on the group symbol). Now ask the second team to name a card. Again, if the word is correct, draw a circle or heart around it. The aim of the game is to obtain three circles or hearts in a row, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally, as in Tic-Tac-Toe. The first team to get a row wins.





**Matching Pairs** Have students form pairs. Each student has a set of Student Cards. Model the game with a pair of students. Shuffle the two sets of cards and place them face down on the desk. One student turns over two cards and names the items: *chicken, apple*. When the cards don't match, they are turned face down again. If the cards make a matching pair, the student keeps the cards. The winner is the student who collects the most pairs of matching cards.

**What Is It?** Have students form pairs. Each student has a set of Student Cards. The first student to play looks at the first card in his or her set and, without showing it, asks, *What is it?* The second student has three guesses. If the student guesses the word, he or she wins the card; otherwise, it is placed at the back of the first student's set. Students take turns asking and guessing. The winner is the student with the highest number of cards.

**Talking Line** Have ready a large selection of cards or pictures. Hand out four to each student. Divide the class in halves, and ask them to stand facing each other in two lines. Students form pairs with the student standing opposite them. Students take turns showing each other the cards they have and naming the words. After one or two minutes, clap your hands, and have the students in one line move one place to the left. Have students move again after another one or two minutes. Continue until all the students who have moved have returned to their original places.

## Story Activities

**Mime the Story** Model the activity. Play the audio of one of the Disney stories. Ask for some volunteers to mime the story as they listen to it. In order to involve the whole class, have different groups simultaneously mime for other groups of seated students. After a while, have the seated students mime and the first groups sit down. Toward the end, stop the audio, and have the seated students tell the story themselves as the others mime.

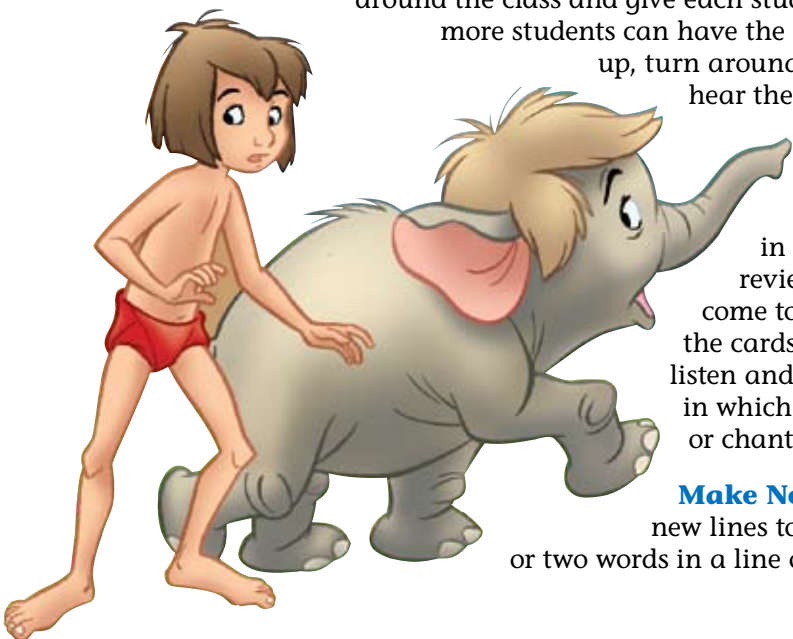
**Tell the Story** Play the audio of a Disney story as students follow the story in their books. Have the students close their books. Then play the recording again and stop at each scene. Ask the students to tell you what happens in the following scene. Play the recording to check.

## Song or Chant Activities

**Listen and Stand** Identify words you want to review in the song or chant. Walk around the class and give each student a word to remember (two or more students can have the same word). Tell students to stand up, turn around, and then sit down when they hear their word in the song or chant. Play the audio.

**Listen and Sequence** Take the Picture Cards that are named in the song or chant you want to review. Ask a group of students to come to the front of the class and hand the cards over to them. Have the students listen and arrange themselves in the order in which their cards are named in the song or chant.

**Make New Verses** Invite students to add new lines to a song or chant by changing one or two words in a line or the chorus.



**Put on a Show** Select several songs or chants. Prepare simple props, costumes, and scenic elements with the students. Choose simple actions to accompany the songs or chants and have the students prepare a performance for their parents or other classes.

## Poster Activities

Display the Poster where everyone can see it clearly (on the wall, on an easel, or on a clothesline).

**Prediction** In order to create some expectation and interest before the students see the poster, tell them what the theme of the poster is before you place it where everyone can see it. For example, tell students they are going to see a poster about toys, and ask them to think about what they would expect to see on the poster, such as a teddy bear, a ball, and so on. (If students haven't seen these words in English yet, allow use of the L1.) Then display the poster and ask students how many of the items they predicted are on the poster.

**Questions** Point to items on the poster and ask questions such as, *What's this? What color is it? Is it big or small? How many (bananas) can you see? Is it a (doll)?* and so on. When the students have learned to ask questions, allow them to take on your role.

**Touch the Poster** Invite individual students to come up to the poster and point to various items. For example, say, *Point to the (red flowers)*, and so on. A variation on this activity involves dividing the class into two teams. Ask a member of one team to come and point to an item on the poster. If they do it correctly, their team gets a point. If they do it incorrectly or can't do it, the other team gets a chance to win their point. The team with the highest number of points is the winner.

**Memory Game** Give students a time limit of thirty seconds to one minute. Tell them to look closely at the poster and remember as much as possible about it. Then cover the poster or hide it and ask individual students to tell you as many items as they can remember from the poster. You may want to ask them questions as well, such as, *Is the (ball) (big)? What color is the (kite)?* and so on. Students answer from memory. A variation on this activity involves dividing the class into several groups. Give groups a time limit and see which one can remember the most items from the poster.

**True or False?** Point to various items on the Poster and make true and false statements about them. For example, point to a (lion) and say, *It's a (zebra)*. Students will call out, *No. It's a (lion)*. Allow the first student who answered correctly come up to point to the next item on the poster and make a sentence.

**Guess** Tell students you are thinking of one item on the poster and ask them to guess what it is. Students can ask, *Is it a (tiger)?* and so on. You may want to give descriptive clues, such as *It's gray. It's big. It has big ears,* and so on, until students can say, *It's an elephant!*



**Peekaboo Poster** Take a large piece of paper big enough to cover the whole *poster*, and cut out two or three shapes (a square, a circle, a rectangle) from it. Place the paper over the Poster and ask students to describe what they see through the cut-out shapes.

**Sing and Point** Use a song from the Student Book that relates to vocabulary items in the Poster. Call one or more students to the Poster and play the audio. Ask the students to point to items as they hear them mentioned in the song.

**Word Labels** Make some word labels by writing single words on sticky notes or on small pieces of paper. Say a word and ask individual students to come to the Poster and stick the word label next to the corresponding item. This can be done as a team competition as well.

**Poster Descriptions** Allow students time with the Poster so that they can choose an item in it to write about. Help students write two to four sentences about their item on an index card. For example, a student writes about a giraffe: *It's very tall. It has orange and brown spots. Its neck is very long.* Attach the index cards to the wall around the poster. Attach colored string or yarn from the index cards to the items they describe in the poster.

